

### REMARKS

Claims 129-226 are pending in the application, with claims 129, 154, 179, and 203 being independent.

Applicant would like to thank Examiner Reilley for the telephonic interview conducted with the undersigned on October 25, 2006. During that interview, amendments similar to the foregoing were discussed, but no agreement was reached on specific limitations that would overcome the current rejections. Examiner Reilley, however, agreed to consider the amendments and, in the event they do not place the case in condition for allowance, to contact the undersigned to discuss further amendments that would place the application in condition for allowance.

In light of the foregoing amendments and the remarks below, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Independent claims 129, 154, 179, and 203 stand rejected as obvious over Paul (U.S. Patent Number 6,052,709). Applicant submits that amended independent claims 129, 154, 179, and 203 are patentable over Paul because, as explained below, Paul does not describe or suggest all of the features of independent claims 129, 154, 179, and 203. For instance, Paul does not describe or suggest "authenticating a user of a sending device at an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein authenticating includes receiving a screenname associated with the user; [and] associating, at the intermediary, the address of the sending device with the received screenname," as recited in independent claims 129 and 154.

Paul describes determining that an e-mail is likely junk e-mail and marking the e-mail as "JUNK." See, e.g., Paul, Col. 6, Lines 45-63. The Office Action contends that it would be obvious to use a screenname or user-defined identifier instead of the mark "JUNK." Office Action, page 2. The Office Action further asserts that Paul describes associating an address of the sending device with an identifier because Paul discloses that e-mail sender addresses are associated with the mark "JUNK." Office Action, pages 3. Even assuming, for the sake of argument, that this is correct, Paul does not describe or suggest associating an address with a

screenname associated with a user at an intermediary at which the user is authenticated, as recited in independent claim 129.

Referring to Fig. 1 of Paul, a control center 101 seeds probe address onto network 110 and, as a result, receives spam e-mails from spammers and analyzes them to determine characteristics of the e-mails that can be used in the future to detect spam e-mails. Based on the analysis, the control center 101 generates a set of filtering rules. As part of the filtering rules, the mark "JUNK" is associated, in some instances, with e-mail addresses in the "FROM:" field (that is, the apparent e-mail address of the sender). However, the spammers are authenticated at their respective e-mail servers, not at control center 101. For instance, to send an e-mail, UT 138 authenticates with server 122, and server 122 handles the delivery of the e-mail. In the event the e-mail is a spam e-mail sent to the probe addresses associated with control center 101, then server 122 delivers the e-mail to control center 101, which then analyzes the e-mail and may associate the e-mail address in the "FROM:" field with the mark "JUNK." Thus, the mark "JUNK" is associated with the apparent e-mail address of sender at the control center 101, while the sender is authenticated at server 122.

Therefore, Paul does not describe or suggest authenticating a user of a sending device at an intermediary, and associating, at the intermediary, an address of the sending device with a screenname associated with the user, as recited in independent claim 129 (and similarly in independent claim 154).

Independent claims 179 and 203 recite "authenticating a user of a sending device at an intermediary located between the sending device and an intended recipient of an electronic message, wherein authenticating includes receiving a user-defined identifier associated with the user; [and] associating, at the intermediary, the address of the sending device with the received user-defined identifier." For the reasons given above, Paul does not describe or suggest these features of independent claims 179 and 203.

Applicant submits that U.S. Patent No. 6,212,184 (Venkatachary) and U.S. Patent No. 6,654,787 (Aronson) (which are cited against various dependent claims) do not remedy the above described deficiencies of Paul, nor does the Office Action use them for this proposition.

Accordingly, at least for the reasons described above, independent claims 129, 154, 179, and 203, and the claims that depend from them, are allowable over Paul, Venkatachary, and Aronson. As such, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these rejections.


It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, objection, issue, or comment, including the Office Action's characterizations of the art, does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue, or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment or cancellation of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment or cancellation. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the rejected claims in further prosecution of this or related applications.

The fee in the amount of \$120 for one-month extension of time Fee is being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization.

It is understood that this perfects the application and no additional papers or filing fees are required. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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